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ABSTRACT

This report examines the history of California school construction financing and its past pitfalls, highlights the problems with pre-existing programs, and explores the history of bond initiatives during the past 5 decades. It begins by examining the State Allocation Board and its staff (the Office of Public School Construction) and reviewing the role of the Board which is responsible for establishing policies for the distribution of school facility financing funds. It also discusses how the Board has evolved during the past 5 decades from one that sets policy for various loan programs to one that today sets policy for grant programs. Other legislative or voter initiatives that have affected the Board's policies and procedures are examined, noting the Board's frequently changed policies that adversely affected school districts' attempts at securing funding. How districts were forced to employ sophisticated personnel or contract with savvy consultants in order to secure state financing for their construction projects is also highlighted. The paper provides details regarding new financing programs, comparing them to earlier ones, and examines how the Board is required to respond to district requests. It concludes with options the State may consider to improve funding administration. An appendix provides descriptions of school district financing mechanisms. (GR)

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School Facility Financing

A History of the Role of the State Allocation Board and Options for the Distribution of Proposition 1A Funds

By Joel Cohen

Prepared at the Request of Senator Quentin Kopp

FEBRUARY 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As California enters the 21st Century, its public schools face many challenges. One significant challenge is the serious disrepair of an aging school facility infrastructure. Another challenge is the anticipated growth of nearly 2 million K-12 students during the next decade that will require many districts to build new schools to meet burgeoning student demand. Recognizing the substantial need for infrastructure, in November 1998, California voters passed Proposition 1A, a bond measure that provides $6.7 billion for public K-12 school construction and repair.

This measure establishes two new programs for the disbursement of bond funds and simplifies the application process by which schools apply for school construction resources. This change in programs, and in the methods by which funds are allocated, is important to the people of the State, as school districts, many of which have facilities in serious disrepair or require new construction, vie for their portion of the $6.7 billion pie.

Historically, the process by which schools applied for and received construction funds was cumbersome and complex. Furthermore, the research suggests that school districts that were sophisticated and knowledgeable about the complicated school facilities construction process were the most successful in securing funding – often at the expense of less sophisticated and uninformed school districts. Proposition 1A corrects much of this dynamic by simplifying the application and administrative processes, thereby creating a more level playing field for all school districts.

In order to understand the significance and relevance of this new process and its concomitant programs, however, it is useful to review the history of school construction financing in California and to understand the various pitfalls that existed under previous programs so as to avoid similar pitfalls in the future. This paper discusses that history and highlights the problems with preexisting programs.

It begins with an examination of the State Allocation Board and its staff (the Office of Public School Construction). Specifically, it reviews the role of the Board which is responsible for establishing policies for the distribution of school facility financing funds. It discusses how the Board, which was established in 1947, has evolved during the past five decades from one that set policy for various *loan* programs to one that today sets policy for *grant* programs.

The paper also discusses how various externalities—legislative or voter imposed initiatives, such as Proposition 13—have affected the Board's policies and procedures. The paper notes that the Board changed its policies often, and its policy shifts created an untenable dynamic for school districts as they attempted to secure funding. In particular, the paper highlights how districts were forced to weave their way through a complex, bureaucratic maze of applications, forms, and plans; and how this dynamic forced school districts to employ sophisticated personnel, or to contract with savvy consultants, in order to secure state financing for their construction projects.

This paper also presents a history of bond initiatives during the past five decades. It is clear that throughout this history there was never enough State money available to school districts for facility construction or repair. In fact, in spite of the $6.7 billion approved by Proposition 1A, experts estimate that an additional $10 billion will be required during the next decade. This paper discusses how the constant shortage of funds caused districts to use "whatever" means available to them to secure funding.

Voters have consistently been generous in approving the vast majority of statewide bond initiatives. Only three bond proposals out of 24 have failed in the past 50 years, and those that failed did so during times of recession. However, it is not clear how much additional debt voters will be willing to incur. This has especially been true since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, when the State began taking on a larger role in supporting school construction then it had before. To that end, this paper discusses how Proposition 1A creates a mechanism for school districts to tap state resources, and how school districts may need to tap other sources of facility funding.

Proposition 1A forges a partnership between the State and school districts for financing the construction and repair of their schools. Under its new programs, the State will provide 50 percent of the cost associated with building new schools, and provide 80 percent of the cost associated with modernizing existing facilities. It requires school districts to match state resources. However, school districts that are unable to offer this match can receive hardship funds based on prescriptive criteria. This paper provides details regarding these new programs and compares them to programs previously administered by the State Allocation Board. It also discusses how the Board is required to respond to district requests.

Proposition 1A is not the only impetus behind simplifying the school facility financing process. Concurrently, the Office of Public School Construction has rewritten the application process for funds to make it more user-friendly to school districts and has even offered applications and program information via the Internet. This paper discusses these changes.

The paper concludes with options that the Governor and the Legislature may wish to consider, including: offering protection to small and rural school districts when bond funds are exhausted; requiring annual financial reporting by the State Allocation Board; providing an on-line technical support for program applicants; and redeveloping the State funding source for school facility construction and rehabilitation.

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH

Programs and administrative procedures in Proposition 1A may produce significant changes to the previous programs and the manner by which the State Allocation Board distributes resources for school facility construction. In light of these changes, Senator Quentin Kopp requested that the California Research Bureau provide research on the following topics:

- A history of the State Allocation Board. How was the board's funding program intended to work and how has it evolved?

- An explanation of the State Allocation Board process. How does the State Allocation Board work? What are the procedures and criteria for receiving allocations? How are priorities set?

INTRODUCTION—THE PASSAGE OF PROPOSITION 1A

On November 3, 1998, California voters passed Proposition 1A - a $9.2 billion school bond initiative, and the largest of its kind passed in our nation's history. Over the next four years, revenues from Proposition 1A's general obligation bonds will provide $6.7 billion to public K-12 schools and $2.5 billion to public colleges and universities for the purposes of constructing new facilities and repairing existing ones.

The State Allocation Board will have the responsibility for determining a fair means of distributing the $6.7 billion available to K–12 schools. Many experts feel that developing such a system will be a daunting task, in spite of the fact that Proposition 1A/Senate Bill 50 is very prescriptive regarding the allocation of its bond funds.

This paper begins with a history and a discussion of the role of the State Allocation Board. Next, it examines the 24 state bond initiatives since 1947 and discusses how the Board has evolved its policies for distributing resources generated by these bond efforts. It then presents an overview of Proposition 1A and how this initiative creates a new allocation program that differs from previous ones. The paper also discusses the various problems that existed within the State Allocation Board's previous resource allocation systems and how Proposition 1A addresses these problems. It concludes with a section that offers options that the Legislature may wish to consider regarding the policies that the State Allocation Board should use for the equitable distribution of bond funds.

HISTORY OF THE STATE ALLOCATION BOARD AND ITS ROLE IN SCHOOL FACILITY FINANCING

There is a long and complex history regarding public school construction in California. This paper begins a review of the history in 1947[1] when the state legislature created the State Allocation Board.[2] Chapter 243, Statutes of 1947, established the State Allocation Board[3] as a successor to the Post War Public Works Review Board. That statute specifically authorized the board to allocate funds for building and repairing schools. In addition, it designated the State Allocation Board to make allocations for public works projects when no other state officer or agency had authority to appropriate state or federal funds.[4] Although it had many other fund allocation requirements during its five-decade history, the State Allocation Board today allocates funds only for school construction and renovation.

Composition of the Board

The State Allocation Board is comprised of seven members: two Senate members appointed by the Senate Rules Committee; two Assembly members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly; the Director of the Department of General Services or his/her designee; the Director of the Department of Finance or his/her designee; and the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his/her designee. This appointment structure has existed since the Board's inception in 1947.[5]

Although its basic appointment structure is set in statute, its actual membership changes over time. One member, Senator Leroy Greene, served on the Board for over 20 years. Some Board members have served for only one meeting, while others have served an entire legislative session.

The four legislatively appointed State Allocation Board members provide a strong policy influence to the State Allocation Board. Through them, other members of the Legislature have input into the Board's policy and decision-making processes.

Policy Requirements

Members of the State Allocation Board are charged to formulate fair systems for determining priorities among project proposals. Prior to the passage of Proposition 1A/SB 50 in 1998, the Board was responsible for developing a fair and equitable appeals process that addressed the "special needs" of school districts. Such "special needs" included disaster relief, inability to secure matching funds, or inability to locate affordable property.

Board members also had extraordinary power to set school facility financing policy. Although the Board falls under the auspices of the State Administrative Procedures Act, it has often ignored the Act's provisions. It was common that board policies were changed from meeting to meeting, and that these new policies were not readily made public.[6] Therefore, school districts that were uninformed of existing policy operated at a distinct disadvantage. They may not have known the appropriate procedures for receiving

financing approval. Conversely, school districts that utilized hired consultants or had staff that regularly monitored the Board's actions knew exactly what mechanisms and procedures would be necessary for them to secure funding.

State Allocation Board Staff

The Office of Public School Construction (formerly the Office of Local Assistance), within the Department of General Services, was and continues to be responsible for providing staff work that is necessary to carry out the policies and implement the various programs of the State Allocation Board. The State Allocation Board is responsible for policies regarding the allocation of funds for building new schools and for repairing, upgrading, and rehabilitating old ones.

The Office of Public School Construction staff is also responsible for disseminating to school districts information regarding board policy and programs. Under its previous programs, the staff was responsible for making recommendations to the State Allocation Board regarding various appeals made by school districts that may have been denied funding, or that may have required special funding consideration. To that end, the Office of Public School Construction staff influenced where school districts fell on the long queue of project proposals considered and passed by the State Allocation Board. Staff also could have influenced Board decisions by advocating for specific school district projects.

Outside Influence

The State Allocation Board and the Office of Public School Construction staff have also been influenced by a variety of external interest groups. These include, but are not limited to, private school facility financing consultants, school board members, school administrators, teachers, parents, developers, California Building Industry Association, financial institutions, and other members of the Legislature. In addition, various state agencies with influence included the Division of State Architect, Department of Finance, and the Department of Education. These interests groups played and are likely to play a significant role in determining funding for projects that may have been denied or required special consideration. Consultants in particular, whether employed by or on contract with school districts, played an active role in the process. Many of these consultants, whose offices are in the same building as that of the Office of Public School Construction, influenced decisions of both the Office of Public School Construction staff and the State Allocation Board. Consultants were current on Board policies and procedures, and were highly sophisticated about the complicated processes that school districts must follow in order to obtain funding. They have been instrumental in shepherding proposals through the complex maze of funding phases - application to construction. School districts that did not contract with such advocates were often at a competitive disadvantage.

Evolution of State Allocation Board Programs—From Loans to Grants

The State Allocation Board has evolved markedly during the past five decades. Initially, its school programs provided resources to school districts via *loan programs* in which

districts were required to repay their assistance with property tax revenues. In addition, school districts used local school bonds to finance their various construction projects. In both cases, a two-thirds popular vote was required.

Proposition 13

With the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the State Allocation Board's loan orientation was significantly altered. Under Proposition 13, the amount of tax that property owners paid was limited to no more than one percent of the assessed value of their property. Local property tax revenues diminished, and the burden to fund many local government programs was shifted to the State, including public school construction. Further, local governments lost much of their property taxing authority, and the Legislature and Governor were forced to rethink how school districts could repay their existing loans to the State Allocation Board.

Recognizing that many school districts faced bankruptcy by being unable to service their loans, the Legislature in 1979 directed the State Allocation Board to allow school districts four options: (1) withhold payments on their loans; (2) temporarily delay their payments; (3) pay only a portion of their loan obligations; (4) or not pay back their loans at all. Further, with the implementation of these options, the Legislature required that the State Allocation Board shift its policy focus from a *loan-based* program to a *grant-based* program. This shift to grant-based programs remains today.

HISTORY OF SCHOOL BOND INITIATIVES—A CYCLE OF UNDER-FUNDING

The electorate of the state has been ultimately responsible for determining the availability of resources for school construction. The electorate must have confidence in the state's economy, and perceive a need for new and upgraded schools. Without such assurances, the electorate can and has rejected various bond efforts. Since 1949, voters have been asked to approve 24 bond measures related to school construction and renovation, and have passed 21 of these proposals. However, an interesting history follows regarding the content of these initiatives.

State as a Bank—The Loan Program 1949-1978

Legislation enacted in 1949[7] and 1952[8] established a loan-grant program "to aid school districts of the State in providing necessary and adequate school sites and buildings for the pupils of the public school system."[9] During this time period, the first baby boomers entered school, and for the next two decades, California public school enrollment increased by roughly 300 percent.[10] The Legislature recognized that many school districts faced substantial enrollment growth, while lacking the bond debt capacity that was necessary to finance large building programs. In fact, many school districts had reached their financial capacity to service the bonds that they previously incurred.

As a result, the Legislature developed a program to provide loans to school districts that were approaching or were likely to exceed their legal level of bonded indebtedness.[11] This new program was financed through State general obligation bonds. This program also required building construction standards and placed fiscal controls on the districts, including maximum cost standards and square feet per pupil limitations.[12] School districts, however, retained control over the design and construction of their facilities. Districts that wanted to participate in the state loan program were required to receive approval from two-thirds of their district's electorate in order to incur the debt. A surcharge on the local property tax provided revenues to service the loan debt.

The State formula provided that the total amount due on some loans would be less than the total amount of the actual loan. Some experts believe that the state's willingness to forgive part of school district loans through this formula was a precursor to the state grant program discussed below.

The First Loan Program Bond Initiatives

In 1949, the state issued its first bond proposal for education facilities financing[13] in the amount of $250 million.[14] This first initiative also began a cycle of inadequate funding. In that year, the Legislature thought that $400 million was necessary (over what school districts could afford above their debt limits) to meet the need of school districts that were facing enrollment growth from the new generation of baby boomers. However, after substantial debate, the bond proposal was reduced to $250 million, because the sponsors thought, "the people would not vote for such a large sum at one time."[15] In arguments

against the bond, opponents argued that $250 million was insufficient. Therefore, absent full funding, voters should reject the initiative. The measure passed.

In 1952, another school construction bond of $185 million was put before the voters. Proponents of this initiative stated that the amount was "extremely" conservative. A comprehensive study by the State Department of Education at that time revealed that $198 million was needed, while the Department of Finance estimated the need at $250 million. Again, the amount of needed resources surpassed the amount proposed, and the cycle of chronically under-funded facility financing for schools continued.

To further exacerbate the shortfall, the 1952 proposition, along with subsequent propositions offered in 1956, 1958, and 1960, included "poison pill" language that limited the Legislature's ability to appropriate any additional funds for school construction beyond that in the various propositions.[16] If the Legislature approved any additional resources for school construction, the amount of bonds that were sold would be reduced by an amount equal to the additional appropriation. After 1960, however, bond proposals excluded the language that precluded the Legislature from raising additional capital outlay funds.

During a two-decade period, the State Allocation Board administered this program as a bank. Resources from the state were limited, and many school districts were uncomfortable with the concept of borrowing money from the state, rather than from their local constituents. Further, since school districts were obligated to reach full bond indebtedness before applying for state loans, many did not participate. For these reasons, many school districts chose not to build facilities until their bonding capacity grew. Hence, many school districts found themselves chasing dollars after their schools were overcrowded—a situation not unlike today.

The Early 1970s

As a result of a major earthquake in the San Fernando Valley (Sylmar) in 1971, the state authorized $30 million[17] for a new program to finance the rehabilitation and construction of earthquake safe schools,[18] and for the renovation of buildings that the earthquake damaged.[19] This program was known as the School Buildings Safety Fund. Like its predecessor programs, the 1971 Act created a state loan program for eligible school districts. The Act also included provisions to forgive loans for school districts that had reached their bonding capacity. The 1971 program was augmented by a 1972 state bond initiative of $350 million of which $250 million was set aside for structural repairs due to earthquakes.[20] This latter bond initiative also provided a method for financing buildings in districts that did not meet the criteria of the program that was initiated in 1971,[21] and it required the State Allocation Board to first approve those applications from school districts for earthquake repairs. The State Allocation Board gave second consideration to funding projects for other types of repairs or upgrades. Hence, the Board began a new system for not only new construction but also repairs, as well as a system that set priorities.

A Changing Paradigm

From 1970 to 1980, public school enrollment statewide decreased by roughly one percent per year.[22] Reductions in both immigration and domestic in-migration to the state, as well as a decrease in the state's birth rate caused this decline. During this decade, there were sufficient resources available from local property tax revenues and from the state's loan program to meet the various rehabilitation needs especially of those school districts that were experiencing enrollment declines. The State Allocation Board thus shifted its loan program emphasis from new construction to rehabilitation, and to upgrading unsafe facilities that were damaged due to the 1971 earthquake.[23]

Nevertheless, some school districts continued to experience enrollment growth in response to suburban housing development.[24] In spite of such growth patterns, the State Allocation Board set its priorities to favor rehabilitation projects over new construction. The Board's orientation accentuated the differences between growing school districts and those that required rehabilitation, and caused an unequal state spending system that favored property rich urban districts over fiscally poor and growing suburban districts.[25]

To counter the State Allocation Board's orientation toward urban rehabilitation, growing suburban school districts recognized that in order to fund new school construction, they would have to depend almost entirely on their local property tax base. As more people demanded affordable housing in suburban neighborhoods, developers accommodated them by building numerous suburban housing units. The sheer increase in the number of suburban homes added significant resources to the property tax base, thereby benefiting the school districts that served those communities. Furthermore, the ongoing demand for suburban housing caused the prices of homes in these areas to increase precipitously, adding even more resources to the property tax base. Although school districts could have requested to reduce those tax rates that supported them to a minimum amount, they did not. Most districts kept their rates steady, and some even increased them. Homeowners, unhappy about menacing property taxes, sought relief. In 1972, the Legislature enacted a multi-year package, funded by the state's general fund, of $1.2 billion for school operation to be allocated over a three-year period and to serve as property tax relief.[26] In spite of this legislation, property taxes remained relatively high to cover local bond debt, and continued to be the primary source for school construction for growing school districts. Concurrently, the state continued to loan money to enrollment-static school districts for the purpose of rehabilitation.

Leroy Greene State School Building Lease Purchase Law

In 1976, the Leroy Greene State School Building Lease Purchase Law was signed into legislation.[27] This law established a state fund to provide loans to school districts for reconstruction, modernization, and replacement of school facilities that were more than 30 years old. The Act significantly altered the state's role in how school facilities construction was financed. Specifically, the state would no longer loan money, but it would finance school construction based on a leasing model.[28] Although the legislation was passed, the voters of the State remained unconvinced that more money was needed to

improve schools. Consequently, they did not pass the bond initiative that was necessary to fund the Lease Purchase Program.

The 1976 Act had specific language that created "priority points" for school districts that would apply for state funding. This was the first time that the State Allocation Board used a point system for creating a queue of approved projects. Priority points were given based on the number of unhoused students in the district, the rate of student enrollment growth, and how much rehabilitation a facility needed. Further, the Board instituted a first-come, first-served policy in which each accepted school district's application was stamped with a time and date.

Under the previous program, the state loaned money to school districts to build their facilities, and the school districts owned their property. Under the Greene legislation, however, the State maintained a lien on the property for the duration of the loan via a lease purchase agreement.[29] The State wanted to preclude school districts from purchasing land on a speculative basis using State money, only to sell the State funded property at a profit at a later date. This meant that the state would control the disposition of any school facility that it financed until the school district repaid its obligation on the lease.

The Proposition 13 Epoch 1978-1986

Proposition 13—Local Governments and School Districts Fiscally Stymied

With its passage, Proposition 13 eliminated the ability of local school districts to levy additional special property taxes to pay off their facility indebtedness. Proposition 13 capped the ad valorem tax rate on real property at one percent of its value, thereby reducing the income from property taxes to such an extent that it virtually eliminated this source as a means for lease payments. Proposition 13 also prohibited the electorate of a school district from authorizing a tax over-ride to pay debt service on bonds for the purpose of constructing needed school facilities.

To exacerbate this problem, the voters soundly defeated school construction bonds in both 1976 and 1978. They were two of only three[30] state general obligation bonds rejected by voters since 1947. The non-passage of these two successive bond initiatives, coupled with suburban enrollment growth, caused a statewide shortfall of $550 million[31] that was needed for school construction projects throughout the state in 1978.

Post Proposition 13

The limitations set by Proposition 13 caused school districts, counties and cities to turn to the state, which had a $3.8 billion surplus, to fill the gap.[32] In 1979, lawmakers approved a $2.7 billion (in 1978 dollars) "bailout" plan to assist schools and local governments.[33] Within a year, the state surplus was reduced to roughly $1 billion. Furthermore, the state had taken on a larger role as a funding source for school operations and capital improvement. To that end, it expected school districts to conform to its programs and projects.[34]

Effects of Proposition 13 on the Lease Purchase Program

In 1979, legislation implementing Proposition 13 included provisions for restructuring the State's Lease Purchase Program.[35] School districts that received funds from the state were required to pay rent to the State as low as $1 per year, creating an "unofficial" grant program.[36] In addition, school districts were to contribute up to 10% of the project's cost from local funds.[37] However, many school districts could not raise these matching funds through local bonds. They requested that the State fund their entire projects. The State Allocation Board created a waiting list of projects.

A Recession Further Complicates School Facility Financing

Beginning in 1982, California was in a recession that lasted until 1984. During this time period, the State's budget surplus was expended. School districts' recession experiences were complicated by the fact that student enrollments again began to increase again.[38] Approximately 60 percent of California's 1,034 districts at the time projected annual growth rates of over two percent between 1980-81 and 1983-84, with some districts projecting a doubling in their enrollment.[39] At the same time, estimates indicated that over one-third of the State's school buildings were over 30 years old and many needed substantial rehabilitation.[40] The Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) estimated that the one-time cost of rehabilitating these older facilities would be $1.9 billion.[41] Further, CASH estimated that school districts would need an additional $400 million annually for the next five years for building and repairing school buildings. Since the State was in recession, such funds were not available. Thus the State had to rethink how it would prioritize its school facilities projects.

A New System for Funding School Construction

In light of the backlog of applications for state funds, the Office of Local Assistance (now known as the Office of Public School Construction) designed a numerical ranking system that used "priority points" to determine a school district's eligibility for funds. This system gave priority to school districts who had students who were "unhoused," and special consideration was given to how districts used certain facilities.[42] The more points a project application received, the higher on the list it was placed. Recognizing that school districts were facing enrollment growth and required further rehabilitation, the Legislature in 1982 authorized a general fund appropriation of $200 million for school construction projects. This amount was later reduced to $100 million.[43]

Further, in order to ease the burden that many school districts felt because of the recession, the State loosened the repayment schedule for its lease-purchase program. School districts were allowed, for 10 years, to pay one percent of the cost of state funded lease-purchase projects, rather than the 10 percent they initially were required to pay.[44] Again, the State Legislature and the State Allocation Board moved away from a loan program and more toward a grant program.

Multi-Track Year-Round Education

Recognizing that the State had very limited bond resources, the Legislature wanted a more cost-effective facilities financing incentive system for school districts. That system would force districts to use their space more efficiently. In response to the shift in policy, the Legislature passed Chapter 498, Statute of 1983. This statute encouraged school districts that were experiencing growth pressure to adopt multi-track year-round education (MTYRE) programs. MTYRE programs enroll students in several tracks throughout the entire calendar year. At any given time, one track is on vacation, but vacation periods are short in duration.[45] The MTYRE program allows a more intensive use of existing facilities, thereby reducing the need for new facilities in growing districts.

School districts received an immediate financial return if they participated in the MTYRE program. A school district that redirected its students into a MTYRE program received a grant of up to 10 percent[46] of the cost that would be necessary to build a new facility not to exceed $125 per student.[47] School districts that participated in MTYRE were eligible for air conditioning and insulation in their buildings.

In 1988, as pressure for state financing continued, the Legislature required that top priority for financing new construction projects be given to districts that used multi-track year-round education programs. School districts that offered MTYRE and were willing to match 50 percent of their construction costs received a funding priority from the State Allocation Board.[48] This put other school districts that could not meet these MTYRE and funding criteria at a distinct disadvantage. These latter school districts sought relief from the voters in 1986. Small school districts were one exception to the MTYRE requirement.

1986 Lease Purchase Program

In 1986, the voters approved Proposition 46. Proposition 46 amended Proposition 13[49] by restoring to local governments, including school districts, the ability to issue general obligation bonds and to levy a property tax increase to pay the debt service subject to a two-thirds vote of the local electorate.[50] This amendment allowed school districts to augment the one-percent cap on property taxes and to secure additional bond indebtedness to build and improve their schools.[51]

Passage of Proposition 46 helped, but did not solve school districts' financing problems. Many school districts were unable to secure the necessary two-thirds vote to authorize local funding, and still relied on state funding to assist them. Further, the federal government in 1986 passed legislation that required each state to remove friable asbestos from their educational facilities – another charge that the school districts could ill afford.

California adopted similar asbestos standards to those established by the federal government in 1986; however, few school districts reported their estimated costs for removing the substance. In light of the need to remove the asbestos, and in order to address the growing backlog of proposed school construction projects, voters passed Proposition 79 in 1988 - an $800 million bond initiative. It specifically set aside $100 million to cover asbestos removal.[52]

A Growing Shortfall and Greater Scrutiny

There is no doubt that from 1982 to 1988 state support for public school construction was limited and difficult to secure. The demand for new school facilities, for modernization, and for asbestos removal was great.[53] As of June 1, 1986, applications that were submitted by school districts to the State Allocation Board for state funding of *new school construction* projects alone totaled roughly $1.3 billion. In addition, applications for state funding for *reconstruction or rehabilitation* of school facilities totaled over $991 million.[54] Total demand for school facility improvement in 1986 was nearly $2.3 billion - an amount that significantly outweighed the $800 million voters approved in that year's bond initiative.[55] Even with a boost of funding of $150 million per year from Tidelands revenues in fiscal years 1984 and 1985, the Lease Purchase Program fell short.[56] By 1988, the shortfall had grown to $4 billion, in spite of the fact that voters had approved $2.5 billion in bond money from 1982-1988.

The State Allocation Board was forced to scrutinize every request for school construction funding, recognizing that absent a major infusion of State bond money, most districts would not receive funding for their projects. This scrutiny created an extremely competitive environment for the limited resources that were available to the schools. Many participants believe that school districts that contracted with knowledgeable consultants, or had district staff who were familiar with the State Allocation Board's policies and criteria, were the most successful in securing a high ranking place in the queue for resources, once those funds become available.

There is no definitive research or data that support this belief. Consultants are not required to report their involvement in the application process. However, there is substantial anecdotal evidence to support the assertion.

School Financing as a Collective Effort—The Three Legged Stool

In 1986, the Legislature recognized that resources were scarce and that no one governmental or private entity could finance school construction. It attempted to equalize the burden of school facilities financing between state government, local government and the private sector.[57] This concept was known as the "three legged stool." The idea was that the state would provide funds through bonds. Local government would provide its share through special taxes, general obligation, Mello-Roos and other bond proceeds. The private sector would provide funds through developer fees. Appendix A describes funding alternatives for these latter two legs of the stool.

The "three legged stool," however, never quite worked. For example, to assure that developers would not fund a disproportionate share of the cost to build schools, the Legislature, in 1986, capped the amount new homebuyers would pay for developer fees at $1.50 per square foot, and empowered the State Allocation Board to raise the cap by a certain amount each year. However, school districts found a loophole around the cap by requesting that cities impose a fee on their behalf, and cities imposed rates on some

developers that exceeded those allowed.[58] California courts upheld these fees in the Mira, Hart, Murrieta court cases.

Until the recent passage of Proposition 1A, many local governments have imposed developer fees that exceed those allowed by the Board. For example, in 1987, fees in San Diego and Orange counties reached a high of $8700 per house.[59] By 1990, total development fees for some homes reached $30,000.[60] Statewide, developer fees have increased from $31 million in 1978 to $200 million in 1997.

In 1998, the State Allocation Board increased the fee to $1.93 per square foot.[61] With the passage of Proposition 1A in November 1998, however, local governments have apparently lost their ability to increase their fees beyond those determined by the State Allocation Board. Further conflict is likely.

The 1990s—Complicated Funding Programs

In the fall of 1990, the Legislature passed legislation that created two programs that provided additional financial incentives for schools to offer year-round education.[62] The first of these programs provided a one-time grant to school districts to ease the expense of changing from traditional nine-month programs to year-round tracks. The second program provided an "operating grant" of between 50 percent and 90 percent of the amount districts saved the state by not having to build new schools. At the recommendation of the Office of the Legislative Analyst, the Legislature repealed the 1982 and 1986 incentive programs discussed above.[63]

In response to the 1990 legislation, the State Allocation Board developed a new priority system for allocating lease purchase money. Under this new system, the Board apportioned funds based on a combination of when an application was received and how many priority points it garnered. Through a complex formula, priority points were given to schools that had a significant number of "unhoused students," or had substantial rehabilitation needs. This procedure might have worked well if the state could have financed all applications in a timely manner. However, the demand for state money increased to the point where districts without special priorities could expect to wait years for the state to finance their projects.

The program was in effect for only one year when the Legislature repealed the program and created yet another system for allocating state money.[64] In 1991, the Legislature defined six priorities for funding. First priority was given to districts that had a "substantial"[65] enrollment in multi-track schedules, and that were paying at least 50 percent of the construction costs for their new schools. Second priority went to districts with a "substantial" year-round enrollment and that wanted the state to pay the entire cost of any new construction for their year-round schools. The remaining four priority levels took into consideration factors for those schools who did not meet the "substantial enrollment" criteria outlined above, or were unable to match state resources.

The complex set of formulas made it difficult for school districts to completely understand what criteria would best serve them. Further, throughout this period, the Board was

required to implement new programs and redefine its priorities. For example, in 1990 the Legislature created a program that was adopted by State Allocation Board for school districts that could not find adequate land on which to build a school. Known as the Space Saver Program, it was designed to assist urban school districts that could not obtain adequate acreage for a school campus. The first space saver school, developed in 1993, is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2000 in the Santa Ana Unified School District, in a former shopping mall.[66]

Another example of shifting priorities took place in 1996 when the Legislature mandated the Board to redirect its third highest priority to class size reduction from a previous focus on child-care facilities.[67] A third took place at the end of 1997 when the priority points system was replaced by a first-come, first served system. While there were exceptions to this rule, money was offered first to school districts willing to cover some of the costs associated with constructing or repairing facilities. Schools that could not afford to cover the remaining 50 percent were placed on a separate list.

Such shifts in policy, coupled with the significant complexity of formulas that drove the priority point system, along with the sporadic creation of new programs, caused many school districts to depend on outside consultants. These consultants understood the many policy changes that the Board enacted – sometimes on a monthly basis. They were also knowledgeable of new programs, and clearly understood the workings of the staff who carried forth the Board's policies. Without the assistance of consultants, school districts were unable to keep track of policy changes and special considerations enacted by the Board. Further, while the Board and its staff advised school districts regarding changes in their policies in a regularly published document, it did not provide a centralized source of materials, such as an up-to-date handbook. Consequently, school district personnel were often uninformed about the various nuances of the programs administered by the Board.

State Bond Efforts of the Nineties

As the State Allocation Board shifted its focus and policies throughout the early 1990s, Californians approved state school bond initiatives in 1990 for $1.6 billion and in 1992 for $2.8 billion. In one of its 1992 reports, the Department of Finance reported that statewide K-12 enrollment was estimated to grow by 200,000 new students per year for at least five years,[68] and that an estimated $3 billion would be needed annually for new school construction.[69] However, in spite of growing enrollments and a significant demand for facility rehabilitation, in 1994, the electorate rejected a $1 billion bond initiative. The State was in a recession.

A lack of State bond funds was not the only problem associated with the allocation of school construction funds. The Auditor General reported in 1991 that the Office of Local Assistance mismanaged state funds. It detailed that construction funds loaned to school districts were not recovered; that districts overpaid on some projects and failed to collect the overage; that it dispersed funds without proper documentation; and that it failed to conduct required close-out audits on construction projects.[70]

As a result of this audit, the Office of Public School Construction in concert with the State Allocation Board developed stringent internal and external audits and fiscal controls. These control mechanisms included increasing the detail of financial review of projects, prohibiting school districts from participating in the program unless a balance was not due, and no longer receiving rent checks for portable classrooms.[71]

Attempts to Ease Passage for Local Bonds

Recognizing that the State would be unable to fund the entire backlog of school construction proposals, Governor Pete Wilson in 1992 proposed a constitutional amendment to reduce the requirement for the passage of local bonds from two-thirds to a simple majority.[72] The idea was that local governments should have to meet the same 50 percent requirement as the State for passing bonds. Further, there was strong sentiment in the Wilson administration that local governments should pay an increased share of school construction costs. However, the Legislature rejected his plan.[73] Other attempts in recent years to reduce the vote for passage of local bonds from two-thirds to something less have also failed.[74]

1996 School Bond Issuance - Finally More Money

Proposition 203, passed by the voters in March 1996, provided $2.065 billion for school facility construction. However, the Legislature at the time estimated that school districts would need $7 billion in construction funds to meet enrollment growth that was anticipated during the next five years.[75] This $7 billion did not include the needs of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which had 20 percent of the state's student population. At the time, LAUSD alone needed $3 billion to upgrade and modernize its schools.[76] Clearly, anticipated demand for State funds substantially exceeded available resources.

To respond to the many school district proposals, the State Allocation Board followed its general priority points policy. However, many school districts, recognizing that they would not receive funding for years because of their position in the funding queue, and because of the limited amount of resources that were available, resorted to creative means to try to secure funding for their projects. For example, some schools districts sought special consideration for funds by requesting emergency allocations. Such a tactic would allow a school district to receive funds immediately.[77] Other school districts used the appeals process to argue that their projects were needed more than those of other school districts that were higher in the queue.[78]

This cannibalistic dynamic caused a fair amount of resentment among those school districts that were bumped from a relatively high position in the queue by those districts that sought emergency relief or special consideration. Further, it was clear that the most sophisticated school districts found a variety of tactics that would secure the funding of their projects. These tactics are described in greater detail later in this paper under the section that describes how the Board processed its applications.

Class Size Reduction Causes Greater Housing Needs

The distribution of funds from Proposition 203 was further complicated by the Governor's Class Size Reduction Initiative. In particular, the State Allocation Board earmarked $95 million for the purpose of purchasing 2,500 portable classrooms for schools that were facing severe classroom shortages. This was in addition to $200 million that the Department of Education had available for assisting schools in purchasing such facilities. The Office of Public School Construction determined that a total of 17,500 classrooms were needed to accommodate class size reduction, and that there was only enough money to fund less than half of the estimated need.[79] The State Allocation Board reinterpreted Proposition 203 by creating a new Portables Purchase Program at the expense of their other programs. This caused some school districts to again get bumped in the queue for funding.

Never Enough Money—Still a Shortfall

Since1947, the electorate has approved all but three State bond initiatives. In spite of the voters' tendency to support various bond initiatives, by 1998, the backlog of school construction projects that were approved by the State Allocation Board, but unfunded, totaled more than $1.3 billion. Although the voters have been generous by approving bond initiatives roughly every two years,[80] there were times during the past five decades when bond money was not available for periods of four or six years.[81]

The Department of Finance has estimated that $16 billion is needed over the next decade for public school construction and rehabilitation.[82] Various bond proposals in 1997 and 1998 were circulated that considered multiple-year bond issuances. The California Teachers Association and the California Building Industry Association presented a plan to issue $2 billion a year for 10 years.[83] Governor Wilson proposed $2 billion a year for four consecutive years. In the end, Proposition 1A was passed. It provides $6.7 billion over a four-year period. However, while the amount appears generous, it will not be enough to meet the entire anticipated need of the state. Based on the Department of Finance projections, the six years following this bond issue will require roughly an additional $10 billion in State money.

Table 1 on page 18 shows the history of state school bond initiatives from 1949 to 1998. In the next sections of this report, we discuss the various programs, the complicated application process used by the State Allocation Board that school districts had to endure to secure funding, and how Proposition 1A attempts to simplify this process.

Table 1 - STATE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BONDS		
Title of Bond Initiative	**Date & Year of Election**	**Funds Authorized**
School Building Aid Law of 1949	November 8, 1949	$250,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	November 4, 1952	$185,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	November 2, 1954	$100,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	November 4, 1958	$220,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	June 7, 1960	$300,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	June 5, 1962	$200,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	November 3, 1964	$260,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	June 7, 1966	A)$275,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952	June 6, 1972	B)$350,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1952 And Earthquake	November 5, 1974	$150,000,000
School Building Lease-Purchase Bond Law of 1976 (Failed)	June 8, 1976	$200,000,000
School Building Aid Law of 1978 (Failed)	June 6, 1978	$350,000,000
School Building Lease-Purchase Bond Law of 1982	November 2, 1982	$500,000,000
School Building Lease-Purchase Bond Law of 1984	November 6, 1984	$450,000,000
Green-Hughes School Building Lease-Purchase	November 4, 1986	$800,000,000
School Facilities Bond Act of 1988	June 7, 1988	$800,000,000
1988 School Facilities Bond Act	November 8, 1988	$800,000,000
1990 School Facilities Bond Act	June 5, 1990	$800,000,000
School Facilities Bond Act of 1990	November 6, 1990	$800,000,000
School Facilities Bond Act of 1992	June 2, 1992	$1,900,000,000
1992 School Facilities Bond Act	November 3, 1992	$900,000,000
Safe Schools Act of 1994 (Failed)	June 7, 1994	$1,000,000,000
Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 1996, Proposition 203	March 1996	C)$3,000,000,000
Class-size Reduction Kindergarten-University Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 1998, Proposition 1A	November 3, 1998	D)$9,200,000,000

Bonds in [bold] failed to receive a majority of votes.

A) New amount of 1966 bond authorization available for regular program is $185.5 million after deducting $35 million reserved for compensatory education facilities, $9.5 million for regional occupational centers, and $35 million for rehabilitation and replacement of earthquake damaged and unsafe schools.

B) Up to 250 million dollars earmarked for rehabilitation and replacement of unsafe schools.

C) One billion dollars earmarked for higher education facilities

D) Two and one-half billion dollars is allocated for higher education.

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THE PROGRAMS

Prior to the approval of Proposition 1A, the State Allocation Board oversaw six active programs associated with school facility construction, repair, and remodeling. These six programs made up the Lease-Purchase Program that was discussed earlier in this paper. This section briefly describes these programs, discusses how the State Allocation Board set priorities for school district projects, explains how the Office of Public School Construction staff reviewed and acted upon district proposals, and how the State Allocation Board considered district appeals. The purpose is to advise the reader of not only the process and administration of allocation, but also some of the pitfalls that existed under the old system. Perhaps these pitfalls of the old system can be avoided when allocating Proposition 1A resources.

The Growth and Modernization Programs

The Growth and Modernization Programs allocated funds to school districts for building new schools (Growth Program) and for repairing existing facilities (Modernization Program). School districts qualified for the Growth Program based on an "allowable building standards" formula.

For its Growth Program, the State Allocation Board developed standards for the amount of space that was necessary to house students based on a district's number of ADA (Average Daily Attendance).[84] The Modernization Program provided funds to school districts for nonstructural improvements to permanent school facilities that were more than 30 years old, and for portable buildings that were more than 20 years old. Such nonstructural improvements included interior partitions, air conditioning, plumbing, lighting and electrical systems.

The Modernization Program provided funding for up to 25 percent of the replacement value of the building. Under some circumstances, districts could use additional funds beyond the 25 percent for handicap access compliance, including elevators when appropriate, and for alternate energy systems.

School districts could apply to this program by offering to match state funds and be listed as "Priority One," or they could ask the State to fund their entire project and be listed as "Priority Two."

Process for Receiving Growth and Modernization Funds

School districts that applied for growth and/or modernization funds were required to follow nine steps in three critical areas - planning, site selection and construction. Each of these three critical areas provided a separate and gradual funding stream for the school's project.

Planning Phase

During the planning phase, a district was required to complete four forms that demonstrated that it was eligible for either the growth or modernization program.

Eligibility to participate in the programs was based on enrollment patterns or the age and condition of those schools that required modernization. If a district met these standards, it moved on to the "site development phase."

Site Development Phase

Selecting a school site was critical. If a school district was participating in the modernization program, it would move to the next phase. The site would have to be safe and able to support the school's curriculum. An adequate site would have to meet certain standards with respect to size and location. Site review could take a school district months (if not years) to investigate. Under the growth program, a school district arranged a search committee to locate available properties and narrowed its search to three sites. In addition, the school district held public hearings regarding the impact of the lands to be used for educational purposes, and notified neighbors about possible site use. A representative from the Department of Education visited three selected sites to review and determine which was the most suitable site based on criteria including, but not limited to street traffic safety; traffic congestion; geological hazards; and other environmental issues. All school districts followed a similar process for site selection whether they financed the project themselves, or requested State funding.[85]

Some school districts were unable to build new schools because they could not secure appropriate properties. This was especially true in urban and industrial areas where vacant land was not readily available or was extremely expensive.[86]

Once a district found an appropriate property, it was required to prepare a site development plan that included architectural and engineering drawings, along with building contract agreements. Districts were required to follow strict site development, plan development, and construction cost guidelines in order to be eligible for state funds.[87] Once these guidelines were met, the district proceeded to the construction phase.

Construction Phase

Every construction project received an allowance for site development and to erect a building. The eligible costs associated with construction for these programs were classified into several broad categories: building construction; site development; energy conservation; and supplemental funding for multi-story construction. In addition, facility funding included adjustment costs associated with geographic and regional differences, or the demolition of an existing structure.

A project architect for each contract developed final plans and documents as part of the project's final stage. These documents were used to establish a construction budget. The Division of the State Architect approved and monitored the district's final plans. After review, a construction apportionment was recommended to the State Allocation Board, which in turn authorized the distribution of funds. Upon completion of all regulatory oversight, the district was allowed to break ground.

The Deferred Maintenance Program

The Deferred Maintenance Program provided a 50 percent State match to assist school districts with expenditures for major repair or replacement of school buildings. Such repairs or replacements were for plumbing, heating, air conditioning, electrical systems, roofing, interior and exterior painting, and floor systems. School districts were required to place one and one-half percent of their general funds into an escrow account in order to receive a State match. For school districts that could not fit the parameters of the modernization program, the deferred maintenance program was the only alternative to receive State assistance.

The State also provided critical hardship funds to repair buildings that might seriously affect the health and/or safety of pupils. When available funding was insufficient to fully fund all hardship requests in any given year, the State Allocation Board created a priority list. However, the State Allocation Board often made exceptions to its list.

The Deferred Maintenance Program differed from the modernization program in that school districts were required to submit a five-year plan as to how their projects would be implemented. The plan displayed a rank for each project, and identified those projects that the school district would likely fund.

Deferred Maintenance Application Process

Based on the most recent available material, the deferred maintenance program had 13 steps, and a school district needed to complete several forms and documents. The 13 steps were divided into categories including a letter of interest, application process, critical hardship project documentation, and fund release.

A school district notified the Office of Public School Construction each year if it wanted to participate. Upon receipt of the initial letter, the Office of Public School Construction would send the district a request for its five-year plan of maintenance needs and an "Annual Application for Funds."

The school district would then provide the OPSC with a list of items scheduled for major repair or replacement,[88] along with its five-year implementation plan. When the district received state funds, it could only expend those resources for those items on the list. It could not redirect any resources toward administrative overhead, repair and maintenance of furniture, ongoing preventative maintenance, energy conservation, landscaping and irrigation, athletic stadium equipment, drapery or blackout curtains, testing underground storage tanks for leaks, or chalkboards.

Once the Office of Public School Construction approved a school district's list of projects it allocated funds accordingly. In cases of hardship, OPSC would visit the school prior to allocating funds. The district's governing board controlled and was responsible for all deferred maintenance funds. These funds were placed in a special escrow account.

The Year-Round Air Conditioning/Insulation Program

The Year-Round Air Conditioning/Insulation Program (ACI) began in 1986, as an incentive program for schools to operate during the summer.[89] In order to participate in the program, a school district was required to have a plan for Multi-Track Year-Round Education, or have 10 percent of its students enrolled in a Multi-Track Year-Round Education program. The ACI program assisted school districts by providing resources for air conditioning and insulation.

Year-Round Schools Air Conditioning/Insulation Application Process

The application process for the ACI program differed slightly for those school districts that had a year-round program from those that were planning a year-round program. However, regardless of their status, school districts were required to complete eleven stages in two phases to receive funding. If a school district had an air conditioning system that needed repair, it could not apply to this program, but could apply for funds under the deferred maintenance program.

A school district completed forms that included information on the buildings and spaces that would be affected, along with a report regarding the project's anticipated start-date. In addition, another application was required that provided information on whether the school site was experiencing enrollment growth, and whether some level of modernization was already in progress. Further, a school district that was not on a year-round schedule was required to show how its year-round calendar would be used. If the district was approved for funding, various allowances were provided to the district.[90] In addition to these allowances, the state would provide funds for gas and electric service, general site development, and air conditioning/insulation construction.

Items that were not covered by this program included costs for heating, window solar film, classroom doors and hardware, re-roofing, lighting, security, interior housing, fire alarm systems, unrelated repairs, installations, and painting.

The State Relocatable Classroom Program

The Relocatable Classroom program was designed to meet the needs of school districts that were impacted by excessive growth or unforeseen classroom emergencies. The State Allocation Board allocated funds for the acquisition, installation, and relocation of safe portable classroom facilities. The State maintained a fleet of 5,000 furnished classrooms that could be leased to school districts for $4,000 per year. Hardship cases could lease portables for $2,000 per year. These portable units were available on a first-come, first-served basis. However, there was no maximum amount of time a school district could keep the portables, and districts were not required to return them. Thus, some school districts have kept the portables indefinitely.

Relocatable Classroom Application Process

In order to participate in either relocatable classroom program, a school district was responsible for site preparation costs including electrical hookup, plumbing connection, a State Architect approved plan, insurance and maintenance. After approval by the Board, the district would be reimbursed for the cost of architect fees, electrical hookup, furniture and equipment, and plumbing installation. However, reimbursements were capped at $9,450 per classroom.

The Unused Site Program

The Unused Site Program was established in 1974 as part of the General Lease–Purchase umbrella. It required school districts and county superintendents of schools to pay a fee for district properties that were not used for "official" school purposes. "Official" school purpose was defined as being used for K-12 education, continuing or adult education, special education, childcare, or administration of any educational units.

This program did not provide funds directly to schools. However, resources generated from the fees that districts paid for unused facilities were used to cover deferred maintenance costs and to service the debt on the state's various school construction bonds. Since the Board simply administered the return of funds to the state, the funds could not be redirected to other programs administered by the Board. Proposition 1A eliminates their fee requirements.

The Office of Public School Construction Staff Review and The State Allocation Board's Appeals Process

The State Allocation Board meets roughly 11 times a year. At each meeting the Board reviews and approves about 200 applications for funding. Prior to the State Allocation Board's review, the Office of Public School Construction staff processes all applications. Before Proposition 1A, the approval processes for the programs, except for the growth and modernization programs, were straightforward. Either a school district's application fit a program's description for reimbursement, or it did not. Due to the complicated nature of the Growth and Modernization programs, "special considerations," or project applications that did not fit in the parameters of the program were placed in a different category. The State Allocation Board approved roughly 90 percent of all growth and modernization projects without special consideration. Issues requiring special consideration could include peculiarities of the proposed site, or the costs associated with a project. The applications were divided into special consents or "specials," and appeals. Both types permitted the Office of Public School Construction staff great latitude in the decision-making process, as they investigated and evaluated school district applications on a case-by-case basis.

A "special" occurred when OPSC staff reviewed a school district's application that did not meet the standards of the program, and determined that an exception should be made. This agreement may have required several meetings between the school district's administration and the OPSC staff. With OPSC staff recommendation, which may have

been inconsistent with State Allocation Board policy, this application would be brought before the State Allocation Board for review. This category was normally granted approval in one action.

An appeal occurred when OPSC staff reviewed a school district's application that did not meet the standards of the program, and determined an exception should not be made. If after several meetings an agreement could not be reached, the school district would bring its case before the State Allocation Board. An appeal was granted only on a case-by-case basis. At times, legislators have spoken on behalf of school districts at Board meetings.[91] The difference in the two types of special considerations was that a school district or its representative would have to defend its actions in an appeal. However, as already noted, only those people who kept up with the process and policy changes were adept enough to tackle an appeal. Therefore, a school district seeking an appeal before the State Allocation Board might seek help from legislators that represented them, or hire consultants. For instance, in the May 1998 State Allocation Board meeting, a well-versed school finance consultant appeared on behalf of the Apple Valley Unified School District. Apple Valley hired both a construction manager and a general contractor to erect its new school, in the face of board policies allowing a school district to hire only one such position. On behalf of the school district, the consultant addressed the State Allocation Board, and pointed out that in five other cases the State Allocation Board had voted in favor of a school district that hired both a general contractor and a construction manager.[92]

Less seasoned district representatives would not have known that the State Allocation Board had already set a precedent for funding projects that include both a construction manager and a general contractor.[93] The OPSC staff was not knowledgeable on this issue and therefore could not be a source of information.

PROPOSITION 1A—A POSSIBLE FIX TO SAB PROCESS PROBLEMS

Proposition 1A not only authorizes an additional $6.7 billion to K-12 schools, but it also offers a fix to several of the process problems discussed above. It replaces the provisions of the previous Lease-Purchase Program. This section discusses (1) the resource allocation provisions of the legislation; (2) the programmatic components of the legislation; and (3) how the legislation improves the resource allocation process over that which existed under previous bond programs.

Total Resource Allocation Provisions of Proposition 1A

The resource allocation system in Proposition 1A is specific and detailed. Bond proceeds are to be allocated in 2 two-year cycles: $3.35 billion available immediately; and $3.35 billion available after July 2, 2000. Of the $3.35 billion that is immediately available, $1.35 billion is earmarked for new construction, $800 million for modernization, $500 million for hardship cases, and $700 million for class-size reduction.

For the second $3.35 billion distribution, $1.55 billion will be available for new construction, $1.3 billion for modernization, and $500 million for hardship cases. There are no resources in the second allocation for class-size reduction.

School districts receive funding for their projects based on a per pupil formula. The formula is based on a statewide average cost for construction, adjusted each January for inflation. The figures are based on unhoused [94]average daily attendance (ADA). The per pupil ADA formula is as follows:

	Growth	Modernization
Elementary	$5,200	$2,496
Middle School	$5,500	$2,640
High School	$7,200	$3,456

It is anticipated that the initial $1.35 billion available for new construction during the first round of allocations will be insufficient to meet the needs of those school districts that are facing substantial enrollment growth. Proposition 1A establishes a priority point system for new construction projects when State bond resources are exhausted.[95] The Office of Public School Construction will process applications on a first-come, first-served basis from subsequent bond offerings.

In addition to the provisions outlined above, school districts that receive bond proceeds are required to set aside three percent of their general funds each year for 20 years for the purpose of deferred maintenance.

Components of Proposition 1A

Proposition 1A establishes three categories for funding. The first is the Growth Program, in which the State finances half the cost of new construction and the school district the other half. The second is the Modernization Program, in which 80 percent of the cost of rehabilitation is provided by the state and 20 percent by the school district. The third category is "hardship," in which the State funds up to 100 percent of the cost for emergency needs, or an increased proportion of its share for new construction or modernization.[96]

Proposition 1A holds harmless those school districts that received State Allocation Board approval for the construction phase of their projects (under the previous Priority 1 - able to provide a 50 percent match). They will receive growth and modernization funds, but under the rubric of the previous "Lease Purchase Program." This grant is supplemented by land costs, site development, and other adjustments.

Another new provision of the Proposition is that school districts can seek modernization resources after a facility is 25 years old, rather than 30 years under the previous program.

Schools districts that had received prior Board approval for Priority 2 projects (100 percent state funding) will have to either indicate their ability to finance 50 percent of their proposed projects or reapply under one of the new programs. If the school district cannot meet the provisions of the new programs, it can apply as a "hardship" case.

The California Supreme Court ruled in 1991 that cities and counties could limit housing development on the basis of the supply of classrooms.[97] Proposition 1A suspends, until 2006, the Court's ruling.[98] With the passage of Proposition 1A, school districts will not be able to limit new housing construction based on a rationale that school facilities do not exist. However, in 2006, if adequate bond funds for new construction are not available, cities and counties can once again deny development. Further, as discussed earlier, the Proposition permits the school board to increase developer fees to up to $1.93 per square foot.[99] Proposition 1A sets up a system where fees can be levied of up to 50 percent and 100 percent of the costs associated with building a school by developers under certain circumstances.

Proposition 1A Improves the Resource Allocation System of the State Allocation Board

Proposition 1A makes several changes to the programs administered by the State Allocation Board. It attempts to simplify the process of applying for funds, consolidates the Board's previous six programs into two, and attempts to create a more equitable funding system. It also makes the State Allocation Board and the Office of Public School Construction staff more accountable for their actions. Table 2 presents the differences between the Board's previous Lease Purchase Program, and the new programs that are initiated by Proposition 1A.

Table 2 - Comparison of Lease Purchase Program to Proposition 1A Programs

	LEASE PURCHASE PROGRAM	SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM PROP 1A
FUNDING FACILITIES	Priority 1 projects-growth and modernization-received 50 percent funding based on actual costs from the state. Priority 2 projects-growth and modernization-received 100 percent funding form the state.	Growth projects receive 50 percent funding based on a per pupil formula from the state. Modernization projects receive 80% funding from the state. Hardship projects can receive up to 100 percent of funding from the state based on three broad categories financial, physical and excessive costs.
CONSTRUCTION EXCESSIVE COSTS & COST SAVINGS	Some excessive costs (i.e., change orders) were reimbursed by the state. Cost savings were returned to the state.	Excessive costs are not reimbursed by the state and school districts keep costs savings.
MODERNIZATION PROJECTS	Buildings must be at least 30 years old.	Buildings must be at least 25 years old.
PROJECT APPROVAL	Projects were approved three times in conjunction with the planning, site acquisition and construction phases.	Projects receive one approval (except hardships that receive two approvals).
FUND ALLOCATION	Funds were allotted after each phase.	Funds are allotted only after DSA approves plans, unless there is a hardship.
MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES	Required school districts to set aside two percent of their general fund for ongoing maintenance.	Requires school districts to set aside three percent of their general funds for 20 years for ongoing maintenance.
PROPERTY LIENS	State maintains a lien to properties it funds.	State does not hold liens, and existing liens are released.
ARCHITECTURAL APPROVAL	Division of State Architect approved all plans.	The Division of State Architect or a state approved private engineering firm may approve plans.

	LEASE PURCHASE PROGRAM	SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM PROP 1A
DEVELOPER FEES	The cap on fees was $1.93 per square foot; however, cities or counties could levy a higher fee and pass it to schools districts.	The cap on fees is $1.93 per square foot, adjusted biannually. Fees may be assessed up to 50 percent of the costs of a project if a school district has accessed other forms of financing including Mello-Roos, G. O. bonds, and parcel taxes. In order to increase fees, school districts must meet two of four criteria, including MTYRE, local school bond positive votes of 50 + 1 percent, 20 percent of students are housed in portables, 15 percent of bond debt used.
WHEN STATE FUNDS RUN DRY	Projects were placed on a pending state-funding list or charged a city-based developer fee.	Modernization projects may be placed on a pending state-funding list. Growth projects may be placed on a priority points list, or the school district may collect 100 percent of financing from a developer.
CONTAINING DEVELOPMENT (MIRA, HART MURRIETA COURT CASES)	Cities and counties on behalf of school districts were able to contain residential development by suspending the building of new facilities.	School districts can not request cities or counties to prohibit residential development based on a lack of funds or school facilities until 2006.
ARCHITECT & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT FEES	Percentage caps on fees based on size of projects	No caps.
MODERNIZATION PROGRAM	Provides funding to building over 30 years old, and portables over 25 years old. Calculations done on a district basis.	Provides funding for buildings over 25 years old and portables over 20 years old. Provides funding on a site-specific basis.
AIRCONDITIONING-ASBESTOS PROGRAM	Allotted funds specifically to install AC and remove asbestos.	These are now incorporated in the modernization program.

Simplification

To further simplify the process, the Proposition reduced the number of school facility financing phases from three to one.[100] This is now possible because school districts receive a flat grant from the State based on the number of students they enroll, rather than on the estimated cost of a project. Under the previous program, each phase of a project was evaluated independently; thus the cost to the State for any given project could change. Under the new program, a school district receives a single grant for a single project, and cannot request that the state fund additional need beyond the original request.[101]

The Proposition also explicitly requires that the State Allocation Board initiate a public hearing process that notices any policy changes considered by the Board. It requires that the Board make available to school districts written up-to-date documentation that clearly explains its policies, and specifically describes how its new programs work.

Consolidation

Until Proposition 1A, the State Allocation Board administered as many as 13 programs. The most current six are discussed above. With the enactment of Proposition 1A, the number of programs has been reduced to two, along with a special category for hardship cases. This consolidation of programs makes it easier for school districts to choose a program that best suits their needs. It precludes the type of creative tactics that school districts were forced to pursue to match their projects to the right program in order for them to receive funding.

A More Open Process

The Proposition causes a major shift in policy direction for the State Allocation Board. Under its previous programs, the Board funded both new construction and modernization on a 50/50 matching basis. Under Proposition 1A, the Board is required to fund modernization projects more generously than new construction projects, in that the State will fund 80 percent of the cost for modernization compared to 50 percent for new construction.

Another major outcome of Proposition 1A is that the State Allocation Board no longer has the authority to offer grants to school districts that may seek funds for special projects without any real statutory framework. Now school districts must demonstrate that they meet specific hardship criteria set out in the new law. The practical effect of this change will depend on how the Board interprets this provision.

Previous legislation implicitly required that the State Allocation Board follow guidelines set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act (APA); however, the Board did not do so. Proposition 1A explicitly requires the Board to follow APA guidelines. This means that any change in policy or regulation considered by the Board must be properly noticed to the public before the Board can act. This requirement, if the Board follows the full spirit, will allow school districts to be fully informed of Board policies and procedures, as well as its rules and regulations.

PITFALLS IN THE PROCESS PRIOR TO PROPOSITION 1A

This section discusses the State Allocation Board's attempts to improve its system and the pitfalls that existed under the previous programs.

Until recently, rules governing the application process were labor-intensive, both for school districts and the state agency personnel (including the Office of Public School Construction and the Division of the State Architect). In 1989, the Legislature received a report outlining the complex application.[102] The report identified 54 steps school districts had to perform in order to receive application approval and eventual financing. In addition, the process required 24 separate forms.

Process Streamlined Recently

Since 1992, the OPSC has tried to be more efficient. Changes implemented by OPSC included: simplified and streamlined applications; improved response time for application review; improved policy information dissemination; and school districts were empowered to complete their own applications.

The most concrete indication that the Office of Public School Construction was becoming more efficient was in the application process. The application process for the Growth Program was reduced from 54 steps to nine. In addition, the number of forms that were needed to apply for funding was reduced from 24 to four.

School districts complained and begged for applications to be checked and approved for a State Allocation Board meeting agenda in an expeditious fashion. As part of the efficiency movement, the Office of Public School Construction set a goal to reduce the time from when a school district filed a completed application until it was placed on a State Allocation Board meeting agenda from over 400 days to 60 days.[103] Prior to Proposition 1A, applications on average still took longer than the 60 days to be reviewed. However, the office's efficiency achievement by reducing application review days is noteworthy.

In addition, the Office of Public School Construction worked more closely with school districts in the decision making process and provided greater leeway. In particular, school district personnel could self-certify certain information pertaining to a project rather than rely on state agency personnel. The self-certification process removed the time a school district would wait for a response from the Office of Public School Construction. It thereby shortened the application process.

Under its previous programs, it was difficult for school districts to get information pertaining to the funding process from the Office of Local Assistance (OLA) staff or from written materials. The Office of Public School Construction is now more service-oriented.[104] One can obtain information in person or from the office's Internet site.[105] In fact, the staff of the Office of Public School Construction is continually placing more information on the Internet. This information includes an automated project tracking system, Senate Bill 50 regulations, office contacts, and old board policy changes.

School Districts in Line Stand on Shifting Sands

Under the previous allocation system, school districts that completed their applications and were placed in queue were never guaranteed funding in the order their applications were received. The State Allocation Board dictated that school district applications were placed in an unfunded application list on a first-come/first-served basis. However, there were four general ways that school district applications could be "bumped" up or down in the queue.

Broad Classification Decisions

The first way a school district could get bumped was if the State Allocation Board decided to redirect its emphasis and fund a broad category of projects. For instance, the SAB could decide to fund all application projects from small school districts (no matter where they were in queue). If a school district was large, hundreds of proposed school projects could jump ahead in the funding queue.

The second way a school district could get bumped was if the State Allocation Board shifted the specific funding program allocations. Thus, for example, the State Allocation Board could decide to shift funds earmarked for the Growth Program to the State Portable Classroom Program.

Specific School District Decisions

The third way a school district could get bumped was if another school district application in queue with a later application filing date appealed to the State Allocation Board to change its application filing date to be ahead of other school districts. That school district application would be funded first.

The fourth way a school district could get bumped was if an emergency situation occurred and a school district requested critical hardship money from the State Allocation Board. The Board could provide these funds when available.

The application process requires equity and balance in order to ensure fair competition by school districts for State funds. The process needs to be flexible enough to handle emergency situations, yet firm enough to prohibit jockeying among school districts for better placement in the queue.

Proposition 1A halts the movement of funds from one program to another. However, the other examples are still feasible. Jockeying of school districts by consultants for better placement in line may continue to occur. This is especially true as Proposition 1A cannot handle the pent up demand for State funds. The next section discusses options that the Legislature may consider in order to improve this system.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SCHOOL FACILITY FINANCING SYSTEM

A Separate List for Small and Rural School Districts

When the Proposition 1A funds are exhausted, new construction project applications will receive priority points for future funding. Small and rural school districts may require separate lists to ensure that they are placed near the front of a funding queue. This is necessary because there is no guarantee that the entire queue would receive future funding. Small and rural school districts, based on the current priority points system, may not receive enough priority points to approach the front of the queue. Larger school district applications, with greater per pupil need, may be able to position themselves high enough in the queue for funding by receiving favorable OPSC evaluations. Proposition 1A allows schools to skip to higher positions in the funding queue if they score higher priority points based on their number of unhoused students or if they can demonstrate a special hardship. *The Legislature may wish to create a separate list for small and rural school districts to create a more equitable system.*

Annual Report and Independent Accounting

In the early 1990s, many state agencies, boards, and commissions, because of budget cuts, postponed writing annual reports to the Legislature. These reports provided financial and policy information to the public. The State Allocation Board was one government entity that has not prepared regular audited reports of its programs' operations and expenditures for public review. The State Allocation Board will receive $6.7 billion over the next four years to fund school construction projects. *The Legislature may wish to require the Board to prepare for the Governor and Legislature an annual report that details how and to whom bond funds were distributed. The Legislature may wish to require that an independent accounting firm or the State Auditor General prepare the Board's report.*

On-Line Technical Assistance

Although the application and funding process administered by the Office of Public School Construction has been streamlined and simplified in recent years, certain components of the process are still cumbersome. The process should be simple enough that school districts do not need to hire consultants or lobbyists to advise them or to shepherd their proposals. *The Legislature may wish to pass legislation that would require the OPSC to develop a technical assistance program to provide school districts with the necessary information and advice they need in order to qualify for and receive bond funds. Such a system could include an automated Internet help-line.*

A Special General Fund Appropriation for School Construction

The State's bond capacity may not be able to fund every State infrastructure need, including schools, transportation, prisons, and water during the next decade. School facility needs are estimated conservatively at roughly $10 billion, while some estimates have put the figure at $40 billion for the next decade alone. According to the Department of Finance, the State can afford to service approximately $25 billion in additional debt. Thus, school facility financing alone could incur the entire debt capacity of the State. *The Legislature may wish to create a special appropriation fund for public school capital outlay as part of the State General Fund to augment the State's bond programs. In addition, the State may wish to design a school construction reserve fund, which is funded from budget surplus revenues.*

APPENDIX A

School District Financing Mechanisms

In addition to state bond funds, school districts have a variety of other alternatives for funding school construction. These include developer fees, certificate of participation, general obligation bonds, and Mello-Roos taxes. Also, a developer may simply build a school rather than consider other financing alternatives.

Local General Obligation Bonds

In 1986, after an eight-year hiatus, school districts could once again use general obligation bonds to finance school facilities. Bonds are a favorable method of financing, even though they require a two-thirds vote and proceeds cannot be used for items such as buses and furnishings. In 1986, 14 school districts offered bond initiatives. In 1987 and 1988, this number grew to 51 and 54 school districts, respectively. In November 1998, 36 school districts held bond elections.[106]

Developer Fees

In 1978, the Wilsona School District was the first to use developer fees. These fees added about $2,000 to the cost of a typical home in the Lancaster area. While school districts were exacting developer fees, there was no statute that explicitly permitted this activity. The Legislature standardized the authority by giving school districts direct authority to charge developer fees. School districts welcomed developer fees especially because they did not require an election, and the funds associated with the fees could be used for a wide variety of facilities that were associated with enrollment growth. In response to a growing number of complaints from developers, the Legislature capped the amount that could be collected in 1986. Proposition 1A prohibited local agencies from using the inadequacy of school facilities as a reason for not approving housing development projects. The authority to raise developer fees was placed with the State Allocation Board. However, developer fees generally are not enough to cover the full costs of constructing a school.

Certificates of Participation

Certificates of Participation (COPs) are another, though complicated, tool for districts to raise money without voter consent. The most common arrangement is that the district leases a new school owned by another government agency or a nonprofit agency, which in turn raises the capital to build the school by selling shares (certificates of participation). In the long run, lien revenues COPs are remarkably like bonds. One disadvantage of the COP arrangement is that it does not provide a new revenue source for the lease payments. Funds usually come from the school district's general fund.

Mello-Roos

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act, established in 1982, authorized school districts and local governments to form "community facilities districts." Subject to the approval of two-thirds of the voters, these special districts could sell bonds to raise revenues for the purpose of financing new buildings, or to rehabilitate existing school facilities. A majority of Mello-Roos districts are created in inhabitable areas that are proposed for development where voting is by the landowners. The district sets a specific tax per house.

ENDNOTES

[1] Chapter 243, Statutes of 1947.

[2] If a school district wants state funding for construction or repair of a school, it must apply to the State Allocation Board for the money. There are school districts that repair and construct school buildings without the assistance of the State Allocation Board (i.e., San Diego Unified School District, San Luis Unified School District). However, this report will focus on a school district that requires state support.

[3] Chapter 243, Statutes of 1947. Initially, the State Allocation Board administered a number of Public Works programs for the State ranging from housing and employment assistance to school facilities construction. Various programs include: the Postwar Planning and Acquisition, Construction and Employment Act, Veterans Temporary Housing, State School Building Construction Programs, Emergency Relief Programs, and Community Assistance Programs (State Allocation Annual Report 1983-1984, p. 1).

[4] California Government Code 15502.

[5] Government Code 15490.

[6] While the State Allocation Board submitted policy changes to school districts, an up-to-date handbook was not made available. In addition, turnover of board members and school administrators may lead to ignorance of programs and the program changes.

[7] Amendments to the Constitution, Proposition 1, November 8, 1949.

[8] Amendments to the Constitution, Proposition 4, November 4, 1952.

[9] Op.cit.

[10] California School K-12 enrollment grew from 1.689 million students in 1950, to 4.633 million students in 1970 (State of California. Department of Education. Education Demographics Unit. CBEDS Data Collection. "Enrollment in California Public Schools 1950 through 1997").

[11] This is defined by California Education Code, Section 15102, as the legal limit of debt that a school district can incur based on the assessed value of property in that school district.

[12] Known as the State School Building Aid Program. The Legislature determined qualifications in order for school districts to participate in this program. They include the following provisions:

1. To qualify for a loan from the State a school district must have voted local bonds to 95 percent of its bonding ability.
2. Borrowing districts financially able to do so must repay the money to the State. Terms of 30 or 40 years of repayments are provided.
3. No money can be borrowed by a school district unless the proposed loan is approved by two-thirds vote of the electors of the district.
4. School construction, financed in any part by State loans will be subject to cost controls to be established by State Allocation Board (includes restrictions on the number of square feet of construction allowed per pupil).

[13] Amendments to the Constitution Propositions together with Arguments, Proposition 1, November 8, 1949. This bond issue was for $250 million.

[14] Voters set the initiative process in motion in 1911 under reform-minded Governor Hiram Johnson. Los Angeles Times. "State's Voters Face Longest List of Issues in 66 Years; November 8 Ballot to Carry Maze of 29 Propositions." July 7, 1988, p. 1-1.

[15] Amendments to the Constitution Propositions together with Arguments, Proposition 1, November 8, 1949. This bond issue was for $250 million.

[16] Amendments to the Constitution, Special Election, June 7, 1960, Proposition 2, Part II, Appendix. p. 2.

[17] School Building Safety Fund, December 1971.

[18] The Field Act, that mandates that school construction is able to withstand earthquakes, has yet to dictate how to build an indestructible building.

[19] Propositions and Proposed Laws, Together with Arguments, Primary Election Tuesday, June 6, 1972, p. 1.

[20] Ibid.

[21] State Allocation Board Report to the Legislature 1972-1973 Fiscal Year, p. 3.

[22] Public school K-12 enrollment declined from 4.457 million students in 1970 to 3.942 million students in 1980. (State of California. Department of Finance. Demographic Research Unit. 1997 Series California Public K-12 Graded Enrollment).

[23] Op.cit., p. 2.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Property rich communities often have more poor people than property poor communities. The presence of commercial and industrial development can make an otherwise poor district "rich" in its tax base. Conversely, affluent communities often discourage industrial development that would make them property rich, but environmentally poorer. The lack of correlation between poor people and property poor districts is often overlooked in discussions of school finance issues. Even though the distinction has been known for a long time. Campbell, Colin D.; Fischel, William A. National Tax Journal "Preferences for School Finance Systems; Voters Versus Judges." Footnotes from Helen Ladd. "Statewide Taxation of Commercial and Industrial Property for Education." National Tax Journal (June 1976): 143-153.

[26] Goff, Tom. "Passage of Tax Reform School Financing Bill Urged by Riles." Los Angeles Times, July 19, 1972, p. I-1.

[27] Section 17700 et al., Education Code.

[28] Property values were increasing dramatically all over the State. This model stopped school districts from speculating on land that was financed by the State.

[29] Op.cit., p. 2.

[30] Proposition 1 of 1978 was defeated 65 percent to 35 percent. Propositions from 1976, 1978 and 1994.

[31] Proposition 1 of 1976 would have provided $250 million, and Proposition 1 of 1978 would have provided $300 million.

[32] Shultz, Jim. "Major Firms Gained Most With Prop. 13." Sacramento Bee, September 13, 1997, p. F-1.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Karmin, Bennett. California's Bankrupt Schools." New York Times, July 17, 1983, pp. 4-21. Linsey, Robert. "San Jose Schools Declare Insolvency in Wake of Tax Revolt." The New York Times, June 30, 1983, p. A–14. However, some school districts that were academically and fiscally well managed prior to Proposition 13 faced problems. In 1983, the San Jose Unified School District filed for bankruptcy. The National School Boards Association stated that it was the first insolvency of a large school district since the depression. The San Jose Unified School District, at the time, held a reputation for excellence in education. It ranked 14th in the state in the ratio of students to teachers, and its teachers' salaries ranked second highest in Santa Clara County. However, since Proposition 13, the school district set aside maintenance and construction projects, laid off teachers and non-teaching administration, until it could not make further reductions and still continue to pay its staff.

[35] Chapter 282, Statutes of 1979. State School Building Lease Purchase Bond Law of 1984—Voter Pamphlet Analysis.

[36] While the loan program was still on the books, the state made exceptions to aid school districts.

[37] California Education Code, Sections 17730.2, 17732. However, the Attorney General cited that 10 percent of local funds to cover the costs associated with facility development is not required. Coalition for Adequate School Housing. CASH Register, November 1984, p. 3.

[38] California Department of Education. CBEDS Data Collection. Education Demographics Unit. 1998.

[39] Coalition for Adequate School Housing. CASH Register, September 1982, p. 1.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Coalition for Adequate School Housing. CASH Register, December 1982, p. 2., (in 1980-81 dollars).

[42] This evaluation was amended annually. The State developed a formula that was based on standards that considered how a facility was used and how many pupils were unhoused. In some years, the State gave preference to unhoused pupils, while in other years, the state gave first consideration to how a facility was used. Facility use included childcare, before and after school programs, adult education, and traditional K-12 programming.

[43] Savage, David. "Resolution Brings Tax Cuts, Schools Told." Los Angeles Times, October 15, 1982, p. B1.

[44] Assembly Bill 62, Chapter 820, Statutes of 1982.

[45] California Department of Education. California Year-Round Education Directory 1997-98.

[46] For example, a school district that needed to build a new elementary school that cost $4 million could receive $400,000 from the state if it chose to redirect students to existing facilities that incorporated the MTYRE program.

[47] Chapter 886, Statutes of 1986, added provisions that capped the grant at $125 per student.

[48] School districts that could not offer to cover any expenses (now referred to as a Priority 2) could conceivably wait years. MTYRE continues today, and has been a successful program. In 1997, more than 1.19 million or about 22 percent of California students attended schools with year-round calendars. The State Department of Education estimates that the MTYRE program has saved that State more than $1.8 billion in construction costs since its inception. In 1997-98, $66 million was allocated from the "mega item" of the state budget. About $40 million was sent to Los Angeles Unified School District to cover the reported 40,872 excess students. However, once students are "excess," they can not be counted as students for the Office of Public School Construction in the erection of new facilities. Approximately 102,000 students are "excess." While the program has provided relief for school construction, it remains a controversy whether educationally the program is successful.

[49] Proposition 46 on the June 1986 Ballot.

[50] Greene-Hughes School Building Lease-Purchase Bond Law of 1986 Voter Pamphlet.

[51] Proposition 46: Property Taxation, June 3, 1986.

[52] DeWolfe, Evelyn. "Schools Get Low Marks for Asbestos." Los Angeles Times, January 8, 1989.

[53] School enrollment bottomed to 4.089 million students in 1983, the same population amount that occurred in 1964. By 1986, student population increased to 4.377 million. California Department of Education. Education Demographics Unit. CBEDS. 1998.

[54] Op.cit.

[55] Op.cit.

[56] State Allocation Board Report to the Legislature 1984-85, 1985-86, Fiscal Years.

[57] AB 2926, Statutes of 1986.

[58] These were referred to as the Mira, Hart, Murrieta court cases.

[59] Later that year, fees were capped by the Legislature at $1.50 per square foot on residential units statewide.

[60] Fulton, William, "California Pulls Out the Stops; Cities Cope with Government Budget Deficit." American Planning Association, p. 24, October 1992. About one-third going to school districts.

[61] Cummings, Judith. "CA Turns to Developer Fees." The New York Times, January 16, 1987, p. A-15.

[62] Chapter 1261, Statutes of 1990.

[63] Legislative Analyst's Office, p. 23. "Building Schools in California: What Role Should the State Take in Local Capital Development?" Linda Herbert. Jesse Marvin Unruh Assembly Fellowship Journal, Volume II, 1991, pp. 1-4.

[64] Op.cit.

[65] Substantial enrollments are defined as at least 30 percent of the district's enrollment in kindergarten or any of the grades one to six, inclusive, or 40 percent of the students in the high school attendance area, see Education Code, Section 17717.7g.

[66] Conversation with Mike Vail, on January 21, 1999. Mr. Vail is the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Governmental Relations at the Santa Ana Unified School District.

[67] The class size reduction program reduced the ratio of students to teachers in kindergarten to third grades. It exacerbated the obstacles for school districts that were growing in size, but lacked facilities to house the new students. School districts that were not growing had to provide additional classroom space to account for smaller ratios of teachers to students in kindergarten to third grades. The State Allocation Board provided portable classrooms to cover the smaller-sized classes. The State Allocation Board estimates that thousands more classrooms are needed.

[68] Department of Finance, School Populations Projections. 1998.

[69] Jacobs, Paul. "Backers of Education Cite Jobs, Overcrowding." Los Angeles Times, May 27, 1992.

[70] Auditor General of California. "Some School Construction Funds are Improperly Used and not Maximized." January 1991.

[71] County of Sacramento Superior/Municipal Court, Court #97F05608, CJIS XREF #250593.

[72] Vrana, Deborah. "Assembly Rejects Plan in California to Ease Passage of School Bonds." The Bond Buyer, January 27, 1992.

[73] The passage required a two-thirds vote by the legislature.

[74] November 1993, Proposition 170 failed by 70 percent.

[75] Colvin, Richard Lee. "Bond Victory Heartening to Educators." Los Angeles Times, March 28, 1996, p. A1. Anderluh, Deborah, Sacramento Bee, March 31, 1996, p. A1. Of the $7 billion, $1.6 billion was estimated for overhauls of buildings over 30 years old, and $5.6 billion for new construction and classroom additions.

[76] Colvin, Richard Lee. "The California Vote (a Series)." Los Angeles Times, March 19, 1996, p. A3.

[77] If a school district has an application with the SAB to repair its roof and the roof is not fixed in a reasonable period of time, further structural damage may occur. This new or additional damage could bump the project to the top of the list.

[78] See the sub-section entitled "School Districts in Line Stand on Shifting Sands."

[79] Bazar, Emily and Jane Ferris. "Money for Portable Classrooms." Sacramento Bee, September 26, 1996.

[80] State bonds were proposed biannually in 1988, 1990, and 1992.

[81] In 1976 and 1978 bond measures were defeated by the electorate.

[82] "Lawmakers Scrap Over Billions in School Bonds." California Public Finance, May 5, 1997, p. 1.

[83] "Huge School Bond Mulled" California Public Finance, September 8, 1997, p. 1.

[84] This included the type of facility and the number of teaching stations (classrooms).

[85] The Department of Education, School Facilities Planning Division is responsible for site review and site plan review and is required to recommend all school locations for new schools and additions to schools site regardless of the funding source.

[86] For example, in 1988, the Los Angeles Unified School District wanted to rehabilitate a hotel into a school. The State Allocation Board paid $48 million to an escrow account in an attempt to hold the price to acquire the Ambassador Hotel. When the school district and State Allocation Board realized that the site was not acceptable and decided to back out of the contract, they found that the developer had removed the money placed in the escrow account. In addition, when the district attempted to backpedal out of the contract, the owner sued for a breach of contract. Currently, there are negotiations between the school district and the owner of the property, Donald Trump.

[87] A school district was responsible for developing detailed cost estimates for the proposed school or addition. Site support costs provided funds for the preparation of environmental impact documents, development of relocation reports, determination of relocation claims, and negotiation of site purchases. The state reimburses up to 85 percent of the amount expended for eligible sites.

[88] This list was limited to those school facility components that have approached or exceeded their normal life expectancy.

[89] Applications for projects and appeals with correspondence from Carol A. Fisher, Apple Valley Unified School District, Author.

[90] Reimbursable fees and costs related to plans include architect fees, Division of State Architect/ORS Plan Check fee, CDE Plan Check Fee, Preliminary Tests (like soil, foundation, and exploratory borings) and other fees, for instance, advertising construction bids, and printing of plans.

[91] Pascual, Psyche. "Funding to Build High School Finally Approved By State." Los Angeles Times, June 17, 1993.

[92] Understanding the board's other five opinions would be difficult to track if not impossible to uncover.

[93] To evaluate the State Allocation Board's policies and procedures, it was necessary to obtain the State Allocation Board Handbook. The Handbook contains procedures and policies for reviewing and criteria for approving applications from school districts for bond funds to build new schools. When this report was initiated, the Handbook that the State Allocation Board provided was dated 1995, but contained policies adopted in 1993. Further, the State Allocation Board changes its policies and procedures often, and has no administrative process by which it updates its Handbook. An up-to-date, comprehensive list of policies and procedures was not available in any other format. A new handbook for the Lease Purchase Program was available on line - however, it also suffered from a lack of regular updating. The State Allocation Board meets every month and, hypothetically, policy changes can occur each month. Prior to Proposition 1A, despite being subject to the Administrative Procedures Act, the State Allocation Board had no public notice or participation requirements for the procedures by which it changes its policies. Only long-term policies are published in the California Regulatory Notice Register. Such policies included contracting and affirmative action requirements. Furthermore, staff reported that policies change so frequently, that it would be impossible to include relevant policies in the reporter or any other document.

[94] The number of students above the maximum number set by CDE to be in a classroom.

[95] The priority points ranking mechanism is based on, among other things, the percentage of currently and projected unhoused students relative to the total population of the applicant district or attendance area.

[96] In hardship cases, the State will fund more than 50 percent of new construction if a school district is unable to come up with its 50 percent match and had gone through a reasonable effort. Similarly, districts that are unable to offer a 20 percent match for modernization can seek relief from the State. Financial hardship is defined for those school districts that cannot afford to build, repair, or replace facilities because of fiscal restrictions (for example, an inability to match state funding because of an inability to pass local bonds or a lack of bonding capacity). Facility hardship can also apply to school districts that lack adequate housing for their pupils due to a lack of health and public safety conditions; or because of a natural disaster, traffic safety, or the remote geographic location of pupils (i.e., rural). Excessive costs may be attributed to geographic location, size of project, the cost associated with a new project in urban locations that may require high security or toxic cleanup, and sites that may require seismic retrofitting.

[97] The State Supreme Court ruled that school districts that were unable to accommodate enrollment growth could ask their city and county councils to limit real estate developers from building additional housing. Some developers found it necessary to offer additional resources (land or money) to get support from school districts and city councils for their projects.

[98] In three legal challenges, the courts have ruled that cities were not precluded from making zoning or other land-use decisions, because of the availability of classroom space, see Mira Development Corporation v. City of San Diego, William S. Hart Union High School District v. Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles, Murietta Valley Unified School District v. County of Riverside. The practical effect of the rulings was that cities could limit development on the basis of the supply of classrooms. Some developers found it necessary to offer additional resources, land or money, to get support from school districts and city councils for their projects.

[99] If the State expends all of its Proposition 1A resources prior to 2006, school districts can ask developers to pay 100 percent of site acquisition and school construction costs. In order to receive developer support under these conditions, school districts must participate in the Multi-Track Year-Round Education program. The Proposition includes language that the State may reimburse developers for up to 50 percent of their costs if subsequent bond funds become available.

[100] Under the old program, school districts had three application phases for each of their projects – planning, site, and construction. Under the new program, there is only one application phase for the entire project proposal, except under hardship provisions.

[101] However, once the funds are distributed to the school district, the school district keeps the interest accrued on the funds.

[102] Price Waterhouse. Joint Legislative Budget Committee Office of the Legislative Analyst. Final Report of the Study of the School Facilities Application Process. January 10, 1988.

[103] One streamlined step is the self-certification process in the Lease Purchase Program.

[104] However, in light of the office's accomplishments, the author had to request information routinely more than once.

[105] www.dgs.ca.gov/opsc.

[106] School Services of California.